

Law Department

Thomas A. Carr, City Attorney

Contact Information

Department Information Line: Civil Division, (206) 684-8200; Criminal Division, (206) 684-7757

City of Seattle General Information: (206) 684-2489 TTY: (206) 615-0476

On the Web at: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/law/>

Department Description

The Law Department is a 75-attorney office serving as counsel to the City's elected officials and agencies, and as the prosecutor in Seattle Municipal Court. Thomas Carr, the Seattle City Attorney, is a nonpartisan elected official.

The Department provides legal advice to City officials to help them achieve their goals, represents the City in litigation, and protects public health, safety, and welfare by prosecuting violations of City criminal and civil ordinances. There are three divisions: Civil, Criminal, and Administration.

The Civil Division provides legal counsel and representation to the City's elected and appointed policymakers. The division is organized into eight specialized areas of practice in which attorneys provide legal counsel, as well as representation in litigation at all levels of state and federal courts, and administrative agencies. These practice areas are: Civil Enforcement, Contracts, Employment, Environmental Protection, Land Use, Municipal Law, Torts, and Utilities.

The Criminal Division prosecutes City ordinance violations in Seattle Municipal Court, provides legal advice to City clients on criminal justice matters, monitors state criminal justice legislation of interest to the City, and participates in criminal justice policy development and management of the criminal justice system. In addition, the Division operates a Victim of Crime Program, which assists crime victims in obtaining restitution, in obtaining information about the progress of their case, and by providing information concerning their rights. The Division also operates an extensive volunteer program through which citizens can provide service to, and gain a better understanding of, the criminal justice system.

Policy and Program Changes

Due to a decrease in the number of criminal case filings, the elimination of two Seattle Municipal Court judges, and a reduction in the number of court hearings; two criminal attorneys and three administrative positions in the Criminal Division are eliminated. One of ten victim advocates is eliminated. Although this reduction affects a position that provides direct services to victims, a decline in domestic violence case filings allows remaining advocates to absorb the workload.

Two attorneys and several administrative positions in the Civil and Administration Divisions are eliminated, two legal assistant positions are reduced to half-time. Although remaining administrative staff absorb some duties, departments can expect a slower response on some requests for legal assistance from the affected sections. The sections in which staff reductions are taken were selected to minimize this impact. To improve the City's position in litigation associated with the clean-up of the Duwamish River and Gas Works Park/Lake Union, one attorney and one paralegal are added to the Civil Division.

City Council Budget Changes and Provisos

The City Council adopted the Mayor's 2003-2004 Proposed Budget with some minor amendments.

Law

Resources	Summit Code	2001 Actual	2002 Adopted	2003 Adopted	2004 Endorsed
Administration Budget Control Level	J1100	1,217,773	1,432,238	1,237,878	1,269,660
Civil Law Budget Control Level	J1300	6,965,267	6,222,041	6,470,642	6,678,708
Criminal Law Budget Control Level	J1500	5,248,994	4,999,585	4,905,376	5,030,379
Department Total		13,432,034	12,653,864	12,613,896	12,978,747
Department Full-time Equivalents Total*		167.90	155.40	144.60	144.60

*The department FTE total is provided for information only. All authorized positions are listed in Appendix A.

Selected Mid-year Performance Measures

Provide quality service to clients of the Civil Division

Bi-Annual Client Satisfaction Survey, which assesses the knowledge, professionalism, responsiveness, and courtesy of legal staff

2001 Year End Actuals: Survey not conducted in 2000. 1999 survey achieved 95% favorable ratings.

2002 Midyear Actuals: N/A

2002 Year End Projection: Achieve favorable rating of 90%. Survey will be conducted in 4th quarter upon completion of one year of the new City Attorney's administration.

The Criminal Division will file 90% of cases against individuals who are not in custody within the Division's charge-specific case turnaround standards.

1) Percentage of filing within standards

2) Average number of days to a filing decision

2001 Year End Actuals: 1) 82.4% within standards (7,913 of 9,600)
2) 22.2 days

2002 Midyear Actuals: 1) 83.2% within standards (1,817 of 2,183)
2) 21.2 days

2002 Year End Projection: 1) 90%
2) 20 days

Administration

Purpose Statement

The purposes of the Administration line of business and program are to collectively recruit, train, evaluate, and retain qualified personnel who reflect the community and can effectively complete their assigned tasks; operate and maintain computer systems that enable Department personnel to effectively use work-enhancing technology; and ensure the financial integrity of the Department.

Program Summary

Eliminate three administrative positions and reduce two positions to half-time in the Administration Division. Maintain essential duties by transferring ongoing work to remaining administrative staff.

Capture additional savings from decreases in Department support costs.

Resources	2001 Actual	2002 Adopted	2003 Adopted	2004 Endorsed
General Subfund	1,217,773	1,432,238	1,237,878	1,269,660
Total	1,217,773	1,432,238	1,237,878	1,269,660
Full-time Equivalents Total*	18.10	18.10	13.30	13.30

**The program FTE total is provided for information only. All authorized positions are listed in Appendix A.*

Civil Law

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Litigation and Legal Counsel program is to provide legal advice to the City's policy makers and defend and represent the City, its employees, and officials before a variety of county, state, and federal courts and administrative bodies.

Program Summary

Eliminate two attorneys, one paralegal, and one part-time legal assistant in the Civil Division, and reduce a second legal assistant position to half-time. Although remaining administrative staff absorb some duties, departments can expect a slower response on some requests for legal assistance from the affected sections.

Capture additional savings from decreases in Department support costs.

Add one attorney and one paralegal position to the Environment Section as a result of a Memorandum of Agreement among the Law Department, Seattle City Light, and Seattle Public Utilities. These positions work on the Duwamish River and Gas Works Park/Lake Union sediment contamination matters.

Resources	2001 Actual	2002 Adopted	2003 Adopted	2004 Endorsed
General Subfund	6,965,267	6,222,041	6,470,642	6,678,708
Total	6,965,267	6,222,041	6,470,642	6,678,708
Full-time Equivalents Total*	77.80	69.30	70.80	70.80

**The program FTE total is provided for information only. All authorized positions are listed in Appendix A.*

Law

Criminal Law

Purpose Statement

The purposes of the Case Preparation, Domestic Violence, and General Prosecution program include prosecuting ordinance violations and misdemeanor crimes, maintaining case information and preparing effective case files for the court appearances of prosecuting attorneys, and assisting and advocating for victims of domestic violence throughout the court process.

Program Summary

Eliminate two criminal attorneys and three administrative positions in the Criminal Division. Realize staff efficiencies in light of declines in criminal case filings, the elimination of two Seattle Municipal Court judicial positions, and a reduction in the number of court calendars.

Reduce staffing for victim advocacy related to domestic violence cases. Although this reduction affects direct services to victims, declines in domestic violence case filings allow remaining advocates to absorb the workload.

Capture additional savings from decreases in Department support costs.

Resources	2001 Actual	2002 Adopted	2003 Adopted	2004 Endorsed
General Subfund	5,248,994	4,999,585	4,905,376	5,030,379
Total	5,248,994	4,999,585	4,905,376	5,030,379
Full-time Equivalents Total*	72.00	68.00	60.50	60.50

**The program FTE total is provided for information only. All authorized positions are listed in Appendix A.*